



**Town of Arlington**  
**Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Office of the Board of Health**  
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**MEMO**

**TO: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager**

**FROM: Natasha Waden, Director of Public Health**

**DATE: February 16, 2022**

**RE: Mask Mandate Rescinded**

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The Board of Health met today and voted to rescind the Arlington mask mandate.

When the mask mandate was put in place, home test kits were not available, rapid testing was not readily available for the general public, and local data were showing case counts doubling from one week to another as a result of the Delta variant.

Over the last six months, the Arlington Health Department has expanded programs to fill these gaps in testing availability. We offer free rapid antigen testing for Arlington residents and employees 4 days a week; and we have also purchased and provided home test kits to high-risk individuals. Additionally, we continue to provide booster vaccination clinics, as emerging data shows being up to date on your vaccinations is the best way to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to a COVID-19 infection.

Massachusetts continues to be a leader in high vaccination rates. Locally, 89% of eligible residents are fully vaccinated as compared to 83% in both Middlesex County and the state. Additionally, 59% of fully vaccinated individuals locally have received their Booster dose, which is again higher than both Middlesex county and the state.

		Arlington	Middlesex County	State-Wide
Vaccination*	Individuals with at least one dose	94%	94%	88%
	Individuals who are Fully Vaccinated	89%	83%	83%
	Individuals with a Booster Dose Administered	59%	57%	52%

Two-Week Positivity Rate (All Ages) <sup>2</sup>	12/5/2021 - 12/18/2021	2.71%	4.15%	5.66%
	12/12/2021 - 12/25/2021	4.10%	5.99%	7.74%
	12/18/2021 - 1/1/2022	8.85%	12.55%	15.03%
	12/26/2021 - 1/8/2022	12.82%	18.68%	21.52%
	1/2/2022 - 1/15/2022	11.72%	17.74%	20.61%
	1/9/2022 - 1/22/2022	8.76%	12.71%	15.33%
	1/16/2022 - 1/29/2022	5.62%	7.73%	10.06%
	1/23/2022-2/5/2022	3.68%	4.62%	6.48%
K-12 Pool Testing Positivity Rate <sup>^</sup>	12/16/2021 - 12/22/2021	0.08%	N/A	3.29%
	12/20/2021 - 12/26/2021	3.50%	N/A	4.09%
	1/6/2022 - 1/12/2022	15.60%	N/A	20.10%
	1/13/2022 - 1/19/2022	10.40%	N/A	13.60%
	1/17/2022 - 1/26/2022	6.40%	N/A	9.00%
	1/24/2022 - 1/30/2022	2.50%	N/A	5.30%

\* Data provided by the Department of Public Health: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/archive-of-covid-19-vaccination-reports>

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Department of Public Health: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/archive-of-covid-19-cases-in-massachusetts>

<sup>^</sup>Data provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/>

Over the winter, the omicron variant was detected in the US and as a result we saw a rise in COVID-19 cases. As we consider the mask mandate, it is important to consider our local positivity rates. At the peak of the omicron surge, Arlington's two-week average positivity rate was 12.82%, Middlesex county was at 18.86% and Massachusetts was at 21.52%. These are positivity rates not seen since COVID-19 first emerged. Since then, the numbers have steadily decreased, with our most recent two-week average at 3.68% in Arlington, 4.62% in Middlesex County and 6.48% in Massachusetts.

Due to the highly transmissible omicron variant, hospitalization rates soared over December and January, reaching a peak 7-day average of over 3,000 individuals. To date, the 7-day average has fallen to just above 1,000 individuals.

Lastly, we have always evaluated the Waste water data for Middlesex County collected by MWRA. The data showed a spike from December to January, but has drastically been decreasing within the last month.

With all of these data points, the Board of Health voted to rescind the August 2021 mask mandate.